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Enclosure

USIB-D-46.4/23

(COMIREX-D-25.3/6)

17 October 1968

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MEMORANDUM FOR: United States Intelligence Board

SUBJECT: Overhead Imagery Reconnaissance  
of North Vietnam During a Truce

- REFERENCES:
- a. USIB-D-46.4/15 (COMIREX-D-25.3/3)  
7 May 1968, and Memorandum for Holders  
thereof, 10 May 1968, Limited Distribution
  - b. USIB-D-46.4/19 (COMIREX-D-  
25.3/5), 19 July 1968, Limited  
Distribution
  - c. USIB-D-64.6/43, 16 August 1968,  
Limited Distribution

1. Attached is a revision of the national requirements for imagery reconnaissance of North Vietnam during a truce, prepared by COMIREX in May 1968 and approved by the Board on 10 May (reference a). The revision was proposed by DIA, after coordination with the JCS, and has been approved by COMIREX.

2. The Chairman, COMIREX, notes that the principal difference between the original paper and the revision is the omission of the requirement for near daily coverage of specific indicator targets. Paragraph 5 a. is revised to specify the need to maintain coverage of Route Package I and the DMZ, as opposed to selected indicator targets and the DMZ. The Chairman, COMIREX, considers the Board should be aware of this change as, if at some future date it is necessary to cover indicator targets not contiguous to the DMZ, it could have a marked affect on the level of reconnaissance, as summarized by COMIREX in July 1968 in its analysis of systems available for reconnaissance during a truce (reference b).

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NRO review(s)  
completed.

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3. In submitting the attached revision, COMIREX is aware of the 16 August charge laid on CCPC by the Board (reference c) and the preliminary efforts of the CCPC to provide a comprehensive intelligence plan for the Vietnam theater under either a total bombing halt or a general cease fire. It is recognized that different conditions under a bombing halt or cease fire could result in a need for COMIREX to provide an entirely new statement of requirements for those aspects of overhead reconnaissance within its responsibility; and it is possible that, after the Board has studied the CCPC paper, a further revision may be in order.

4. It is recommended that the attached revision to the May 1968 requirements be forwarded to the Board for consideration.

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Chairman

Committee on Imagery Requirements and Exploitation

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d. Coverage of indicator targets in South China will continue to be accomplished primarily by satellite means.

4. The extent and frequency of airborne imagery reconnaissance directed against North Vietnam during a "cease fire" or truce period must be consistent with the detection of five major categories of activity:

- a. Logistical support to, and build-up of communist forces throughout North Vietnam.
- b. Deployment of infiltration forces toward South Vietnam.
- c. Introduction into North Vietnam of new offensive weapons or other advanced systems.
- d. Third party involvement.
- e. Compliance with specified provisions of any truce agreement.

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5. [REDACTED] it is essential that airborne imagery reconnaissance be conducted over North Vietnam as follows:

- a. It is necessary to maintain coverage of Route Package 1 and the DMZ, as often as weather and operational factors permit, during the initial period of a truce until we are confident of North Vietnam's probable military posture as well as during any subsequent period in which other sources indicate the possibility of significant change in that military posture.

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SUBJECT: Overhead Imagery Reconnaissance of North  
Vietnam During a Truce [REDACTED]

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1. This memorandum addresses the national requirements for imagery reconnaissance over North Vietnam during a truce. Specifically, the purpose of this memorandum is to recommend to USIB a statement of the intelligence requirements upon which the level and mix of U.S. reconnaissance required during a truce would be determined.

2. While certain political guarantees might be offered or truce commissions designated as a means of policing the truce, past experience has indicated that overhead imagery reconnaissance is an important means of detecting non-compliance with truce provisions. In the event the U.S. and North Vietnam enter into a truce agreement, U.S. reconnaissance must be maintained at a level sufficient to detect any significant attempt on the part of the North Vietnamese to take advantage of the truce to introduce new or improved capabilities, redeploy forces, or prepare for a surprise offensive. Such actions need to be identified soon enough to permit necessary and timely counteraction, whether political or military, to be taken.

3. In developing this memorandum, COMIREX has accepted the following assumptions as the minimum necessary to complement the level of overhead reconnaissance of North Vietnam regarded as essential to police the truce:

a. Reconnaissance coverage will continue over Laos as at present.

b. No restrictions will be placed on aerial or surface reconnaissance conducted on or over international waters adjacent to North Vietnam.

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b. For the same reasons, it is necessary to maintain at least weekly coverage of selected highways, railways and border areas of the Panhandle south of 20° north.

c. It is also necessary to obtain weekly coverage of selected high priority railyards and ports in the northern segment of North Vietnam which could give preoperational evidence of the introduction of surface-to-surface missiles or other weapons into North Vietnam.

d. For the remainder of North Vietnam, at least twice monthly coverage of military and logistical targets to support intelligence assessments of the nature and extent of any build-up in other areas of North Vietnam.

e. Monthly coverage of selected Air Defense Facilities.

f. Coverage obtained in meeting the preceding requirements should be programmed to meet current area coverage requirements needed to search for the introduction of new weapons into North Vietnam.

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6. Based on past experience, weather poses the most difficult problem in the orderly acquisition of photography of North Vietnam. It has a particularly serious impact upon satellite coverage and, to a lesser and varied degree, upon manned and drone reconnaissance coverage as well.

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over the Hanoi area, for example, is possible only two days in June, low altitude reconnaissance is possible on 20 days in June. Similar anomalies between high and low altitude cloud patterns are found for the Panhandle area and the northwest mountainous region. The average number of days each month which are suitable for high and low altitude reconnaissance over North Vietnam are shown in Annex A.

7. A comparison of these requirements with the expected days of suitable weather shown in Annex A indicates that we will almost certainly not be able to meet them in all areas for all periods of the year by high-altitude reconnaissance alone. During periods of worst climatology, therefore, we should retain the capability to conduct reconnaissance below cloud level or be prepared to accept the weather degradation to the adequacy of our imagery reconnaissance.

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Annex A

Average number of days each month suitable for high and low altitude photography\*

		Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Lao Kay (NW mountains)	High	4.0	4.0	7.0	10.0	6.0	3.0	2.0	3.0	5.0	6.0	8.0	10.0
	Low	6.0	5.0	9.0	11.0	12.0	9.0	9.0	14.0	14.0	18.0	12.0	13.0
Hanoi	High	5.3	3.5	3.8	3.6	2.8	2.0	1.9	1.8	4.0	9.1	5.9	9.0
	Low	8.5	4.0	4.7	9.7	15.1	20.1	21.3	18.7	19.5	20.5	15.5	15.0
Dong Hoi	High	5.0	6.0	7.0	10.0	5.0	3.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	7.0	7.0	5.0
	Low	8.0	8.0	11.0	17.0	20.0	20.0	21.0	19.0	14.0	15.0	11.0	10.0
Vinh	High	4.0	3.0	4.0	7.0	6.0	3.0	4.0	3.0	2.0	3.0	2.0	5.0
	Low	6.0	8.0	4.0	11.0	18.0	17.0	16.0	15.0	8.0	9.0	6.0	13.0

\*Low Altitude: Less than 3/10 cloud cover at 3,000 feet

\*High Altitude: Less than 3/10 overall cloud cover

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